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**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
BROADCAST LOCALISM HEARING
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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

PATTI MILLER TESTIMONY

CHILDREN NOW

Children Now would like to thank the FCC for holding hearings around the country and in Monterey today to determine how broadcasters are serving their local communities. As the FCC evaluates how broadcasters are responding to the needs of local communities, they should consider, first and foremost, how children's needs are being served.

Under FCC guidelines, stations are expected to air a minimum of three hours per week of children's educational and informational (E/I) programming at times when children are likely to be watching. These guidelines were enacted after stations claimed that *The Flintstones* taught children about history and *The Jetsons* taught children about the future. To assess how commercial television stations are serving the child audience, Children Now and the Institute for Public Representation at Georgetown University analyzed the Children's Television Reports for the last quarter of 2003 prepared by the four full-power television stations in the Monterey-Salinas designated market area.

Our analysis found that many of the shows still do not have educating or informing children as a significant purpose of the program, as required by FCC rules. Here are just a few examples of how broadcasters have inappropriately characterized programs as serving children's educational and informational needs.

KCBA describes the E/I objective for *NFL Under the Helmet* as "showcasing the pro-social on and off the field activities of the NFL's leading players and coaches."

The educational objective for KSBW's *Kenny the Shark* is as follows: "Kenny the Shark is about a tiger shark that has made the transition from sea to land, but it's very hard to adapt to new conditions. He lives with Kat, a middle-school student, and her family. In the process of watching Kenny deal with his situation we learn real-world facts about shark behavior, habits, and biology."

I don't know about you, but I am not aware of any "real-world" sharks that live on land.

Even if we accept at face value the broadcasters' questionable characterization of certain shows as children's educational programming, two stations fell short of the three hour minimum

guideline (Fox Affiliate KCBA and Univision Affiliate KSMS), one aired the minimum three hours (CBS Affiliate KION), and one station (NBC Affiliate KSBW) aired slightly more than 3 hours of children's educational programming per week. It's very troubling that broadcasters are having difficulty in meeting what is a very minimal requirement.

We also found that broadcasters in Monterey-Salinas also are not meeting the distinct needs of children in the community they are serving. Children make up 27 percent of the population in the Monterey-Salinas designated market area.ⁱ Sixty five percent of these children are children of colorⁱ and more than half of all children in the area (56%) identify as being of Latino or Hispanic origin.ⁱⁱ Furthermore, nearly half of school age children (44%) speak Spanish at home.ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite the unique demographic characteristics of this community, there is only one high-power Spanish language station in the area. And that station, KSMS, offers only two E/I programs.

There also are no locally-produced E/I programs in the Monterey-Salinas market that are specific to the needs and interests of this diverse community. All of the 20 programs that broadcasters claim as core programming originate from the networks or are syndicated. This is due in part to increasing media consolidation, resulting in fewer station owners who are interested in or aware of how to best serve local communities.

We are also concerned that it is difficult for parents and children to find and watch the small amount of educational programming that is aired. We found that one-fifth of the children's educational programming on KSBW, the NBC affiliate, was preempted by sports programming, most of which was not re-scheduled. Frequent preemptions make it difficult for children and parents to find programs and for such programs to develop a loyal audience.

Finally, E/I programs were not scheduled at the times in which children would most likely be watching. E/I programming was almost exclusively broadcast on Saturday and Sunday mornings, even though with the exception of late-night, these time periods are the least likely times for children to be watching television.^{iv}

In summary, local broadcasters in the Monterey-Salinas area clearly are not meeting their public interest obligations to children. The children in this community should have access to a variety of programming that is specifically designed to meet their educational needs, not just entertaining cartoons with a vaguely pro-social message. They also deserve programming that actually educates and informs them about the community they live in. It is particularly troubling that despite the ethnic and cultural diversity in the Monterey-Salinas market, there are no locally-produced E/I programs that reflect the community, and very few Spanish language E/I shows for that matter.

In exchange for the free use of the airwaves, broadcasters have a public interest obligation to children in the communities they serve. We ask the FCC to ensure that broadcasters in Monterey-Salinas and across the country do a better job in meeting the needs of children.

ⁱ Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2002 American Community Survey Summary Tables, Tables P004 & P005K, <http://factfinder.census.gov/>, generated July 12, 2004.

ⁱⁱ Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2002 American Community Survey Summary Tables, Tables P004 & P005J, <http://factfinder.census.gov/>, generated July 12, 2004.

ⁱⁱⁱ Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2002 American Community Survey Summary Tables, Table P035, <http://factfinder.census.gov/>, generated July 12, 2004.

^{iv} Nielsen Media Research, 2000 Report on Television (New York, NY: Nielsen Media Research, 2000), p. 14.